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Small Business Owners Show Distinctive Traits

You don't hear much these days about "intrapreneurship," the effort made a few years ago by big corporations to capture the entrepreneurial qualities that help small businesses succeed.

Owners of small businesses, it turns out, have one kind of get-up-and-go. Managers who thrive in the corporate bureaucracy have another.

The entrepreneur tends to rely more on his or her own ideas and abilities. He or she alone decides what kind of business to run, gets seed money, figures out how to get the business off the ground and keep it going, and wears multiple hats: leader, problem solver, hard worker, employer, public-relations expert, and more.

Good corporate managers tend to be team players. They can offer insights but also go along with the group consensus. Many also specialize in one particular aspect of business management. When it comes to drive and originality, the corporate world's experience shows that independent-unit intrapreneurs can't match the small-business entrepreneur.